

blinding the pilot and crew. One pilot described the feeling of being hit by a laser like this: "It immediately [lit] up the whole cockpit and it hit both of my eyes and burned both of my corneas. Instantly, I was blinded. It felt like I was hit in the face with a baseball bat—just an intense, burning pain." FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt warned that lasers can "damage a pilot's eyes or cause temporary blindness." In an event on this topic held last year at T.F. Green Airport in my home state of Rhode Island, a pilot explained that the temporary blindness from a laser hit can last several seconds or longer, and when a plane is rapidly approaching the ground for landing, "one second can make a big difference."

This kind of threat to a pilot's sight—particularly during the critical phases of takeoff and landing—poses an unacceptable risk to the travelling public, our pilots and crew, and citizens on the ground. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood has thus described laser incidents as "a serious safety issue."

The problem has grown in recent years. According to a report earlier this year by the Federal Aviation Administration, 2,836 pilots reported they were targeted with lasers in 2010, nearly double the number in 2009. These strikes occur at airports all across the country. At T.F. Green Airport, for example, there were 12 such reported incidents last year. The threat, which puts interstate commerce and travel at risk, requires attention at the national level.

Current Federal law does not provide prosecutors with sufficient tools to prosecute and deter this dangerous conduct. Ill-fitting existing statutes can only be used in limited cases, leaving even identified perpetrators to go unpunished. My legislation would solve this problem by creating a criminal offense that clearly covers this harmful conduct. It would explicitly criminalize knowingly aiming the beam of a laser pointer at an aircraft. Violations would lead to punishment of imprisonment for up to 5 years or fines up to \$250,000. The bill would exempt valid uses of laser pointers in the aviation context, such as designated research and development activities, flight test operations, training, and emergency signaling. Prosecutors thus would have a new valuable tool to protect air safety without any burden being imposed on legitimate use of lasers.

I thank Senators KIRK, BOXER, and FEINSTEIN for their leadership on this issue, and our partners in the House for their work. I hope Senators from both sides of the aisle will join me in enacting this legislation to protect American aviation.

#### CENTRAL AMERICA REPORT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, as chairman of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, I am

pleased to release a report today outlining key steps that the United States can take to assist our friends in Central America as they try to reduce escalating violence. The report—entitled "Responding to Violence in Central America"—is endorsed by all seven Senators on the Caucus. In particular, I want to thank my cochairman Senator GRASSLEY for his efforts on this report.

Violence in Central America has reached crisis levels. Throughout Central America, Mexican drug trafficking organizations, local drug traffickers, transnational youth gangs, and other illegal criminal networks are taking advantage of weak governance and underperforming justice systems.

Contrary to what many might think, the murder rates in Central America last year were significantly higher than those in Mexico. In 2010, there were 18 homicides per 100,000 people in Mexico. In comparison, there were 50 murders per 100,000 people in Guatemala, 66 in El Salvador and 77 in Honduras. GEN Douglas Fraser—the Commander of U.S. Southern Command—said that "the northern triangle of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras is the deadliest zone in the world outside of war zones."

Our report calls for security in Central America to become a greater priority across all U.S. Government agencies. The caucus calls for a two-track approach to U.S. assistance to Central America focusing in the short term on highly vetted law enforcement units while not losing sight of the long-term goal of strengthening institutions.

The report's key recommendations include:

**Expand vetted units:** The caucus calls for the expansion of vetted law enforcement units which work with the Drug Enforcement Administration—known as sensitive investigative units—to all seven countries in Central America. Vetted units provide a trusted partner to U.S. law enforcement in countries where corruption is often rampant. I supported language that was included in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science's Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriations bill that recommends the expansion of these units throughout Central America.

**Speed up security assistance:** Our report calls on the State Department to speed up the arrival of security assistance to Central America by changing it from being managed remotely by the U.S. Embassy in Mexico to allowing it to be managed directly by each of the U.S. embassies in Central America.

**Increase drug traffickers' extraditions:** Our report recommends that the Obama administration encourage our partners in Central America to increase the extradition to the United States of their nationals who are involved in international drug trafficking. Currently, Panama, Honduras, and Costa Rica will not extradite their nationals to the United States.

The caucus believes that extradition from Mexico to the United States has been a critical tool in combating Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Bringing these fugitives to the United States for prosecution ensures that they cannot evade justice through bribes or threats of violence in their home countries.

**Support witness, judge and prosecutor protection programs:** Next, our report calls for the State Department and USAID to use existing funds to provide support for witness, judge and prosecutor protection programs in Central America. Far too often, witnesses in Central America are afraid to testify at hearings because of corruption in the judicial system and fear of retaliation. Judges and prosecutors are equally afraid to pursue cases against high-profile criminals.

**Map sources of violence:** Our report recommends that the countries of Central America map the causes and sources of violence in the region. Without a clear understanding of the causes and sources of violence, it will be difficult to provide relevant solutions to the security situation in Central America.

**Reduce the U.S. demand for drugs:** Last, but certainly not least, the caucus's report emphasizes that drug consumption in the United States fuels violence in Central America. The United States continues to be the world's largest consumer of illegal drugs. The 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 22.6 million Americans aged 12 or older were current illegal drug users.

Senator GRASSLEY and I have asked the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of drug prevention and treatment programs in the United States. I have also asked my staff to prepare a report on how to most effectively reduce the U.S. demand for drugs.

Central America is at a dangerous crossroads. A further deterioration of the security situation in Central America could severely damage already weak institutions and justice systems. I, therefore, urge the Obama administration and my colleagues in Congress to make security in Central America a priority.

#### TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL DAVIDSON

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize Mr. Michael Davidson, the former General Counsel of the Select Committee on Intelligence, for his long and distinguished service to the U.S. Senate. Mike quietly retired from the U.S. Senate for the second time on Labor Day, September 5, 2011.

At the Select Committee on Intelligence, where he worked for 8 years during his second career here in the Senate, he was always a source of wisdom and optimism. Mike was invariably calm, thoughtful and constructive. These qualities, in combination



with his brilliant legal mind and prodigious memory, made him an invaluable member of the committee staff. Indeed, Mike had a unique ability to recall past legislation, reports, or other parts of Senate history, and find them in archives and mostly forgotten records, to make sure that present day decisions were informed by the past.

In addition, Mike was known and respected throughout Washington. He will be greatly missed, not only by our committee, but by the many people who have had the privilege to work with him from other offices in the Congress, the executive branch, and the private sector. I know, and am appreciative, that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence will be honoring Mike in October for his numerous services to the committee and the intelligence community.

I have often been amazed at the varied backgrounds of Senators and Senate staff alike, and Mike Davidson is another example why. He grew up in Brooklyn, NY, where his father was a professor of theater at Brooklyn College, and where we believe his devotion to the New York Mets was born. Mike received his bachelor of arts in history from Cornell University in 1961 and his law degree from the University of Chicago in 1964. With law degree in hand, Mike became one of the first Peace Corps volunteers in Kenya where he served for 3 years. Upon his return to the United States, he worked at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund between 1967 and 1973, trying civil rights cases and arguing appeals in various Federal courts. From 1974 to 1977, Mike taught clinical law at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Moving to Washington in 1977, he served as the chief staff counsel for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

In 1979, Mike became the Senate's very first legal counsel, representing the Senate in separation-of-powers and other litigation, and assisting committees in ethics, impeachment and other special investigations. One of the separation-of-powers cases Mike argued before the Supreme Court was *INS v. Chadha*. It turned out that Mike from his Peace Corps days actually knew the appellee Jagdish Chadha, who had been born in Kenya of Indian parents. Not only did Mr. Chadha not take personal offense that the Congress, through opposing counsel Michael Davidson, was trying to deport him, but because of his respect and admiration for Mike, Mr. Chadha brought a bottle of champagne to the Senate Legal Counsel's Office the next day to celebrate Mike's appearance before the Court.

In 1995, Mike retired from the Senate for the first time, but he soon found himself directing or serving as counsel to projects led by current or former U.S. Senators, including a project at the Aspen Institute, a joint project of the American Enterprise Institute and Brookings Institution, and a project at the Constitution Project.

Mike returned to the Senate in 2002 to serve as the general counsel for the

Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001. Mike's work for the joint inquiry involved not only fact finding about the conduct of U.S. intelligence agencies prior to the terrorist attacks, but also successful advocacy before Judge Leonie Brinkema in the case of *United States v. Moussaoui*. The appearance was necessary to ensure that the congressional Joint Inquiry had the testimony it needed to tell the story of the FBI's Moussaoui investigation prior to the 9/11 attacks without interfering with the Moussaoui proceedings or other pending criminal prosecutions and investigations. Shortly after the completion of the Joint Inquiry in 2003, Mike joined the Select Committee on Intelligence as minority counsel for then-Vice Chairman JAY ROCKEFELLER. In 2007, he became the committee's general counsel, first for Chairman ROCKEFELLER and later myself.

As general counsel, Mike led the work of the committee on all legislation referred to it and reported from it. Mike's tireless efforts, and his skill in bringing people together to talk about the issues, even after others had given up, led to the passage of an intelligence authorization act signed into law in October 2010, the first authorization bill for the intelligence community enacted in 6 years.

I can certainly attest that passage of that legislation was far from assured. The administration showed little enthusiasm for it, other committees objected to numerous provisions included, and the House of Representatives appeared insistent on two provisions—having to do with intelligence notifications to Congress and with investigations by the Government Accountability Office into intelligence matters—that were subject to veto threats. Mike was instrumental in resolving both those issues, and with working through countless other hurdles, in achieving enactment.

Within 9 months, the committee also saw passage and enactment of its second intelligence authorization act, with the fiscal year 2011 bill signed into law on June 8, 2011. We are well on our way with a third authorization bill in 12 months with the intelligence authorization act for fiscal year 2012.

Mike's careful legislative approach was very much in evidence during the much more prolonged congressional consideration of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Amendments Act of 2008, during which he worked patiently to find legislative solutions that would satisfy the concerns of the intelligence community in modernizing one of the most important of its authorizing statutes, while also addressing a range of views in the Senate and the House and respecting the privacy and civil liberties concerns of Americans. Mike's painstaking attention to detail in the committee's reports and statements, with this act and throughout his tenure, has resulted in exem-

plary legislative histories for the bills we have reported—an important, and sometimes neglected, aspect in how our laws are implemented and interpreted.

Mike also paid special attention to building the public record concerning the work of the Intelligence Committee. Because of his efforts, the committee has greatly increased the number of public documents available on the committee's website, from the committee's own biennial activities reports to the yearly legislative request from the executive branch. Behind the scenes, Mike sought systematic approaches to informing the public about U.S. intelligence activities to the maximum extent possible consistent with national security.

Mr. Davidson was also essential in the committee's efforts to honor the sacrifices made by the men and women of the intelligence community, and their families, and to ensure that all intelligence agency employees received fair treatment and appropriate recognition by the Nation they served. All Senators understand the importance of taking care of their constituents. The Intelligence Committee attempts, where possible, to take care of intelligence professionals who often have no other place to turn. Not surprisingly to those who know him, Mike took special care with this responsibility. I recall one example—involving a legal dispute over a family member of an intelligence officer—where Mike's intervention led to justice being done, a family being preserved, and an intelligence professional being able subsequently to focus his attention on an absolutely essential operation.

As I mentioned, Mike retired from the Senate very quietly, working away on committee business to the last minute of his last day on the job. We know, however, that he is relishing the chance to spend more time in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado where he and his wife Karen have a second home near Denver, the home of son Jesse, daughter-in-law Ellen, and grandchildren Jordan and Garrett, and where his daughter Kate often visits. We fully expect, however, that with Mike's great energy and legal abilities he will continue to make a contribution to his country from his home here in the District of Columbia as well.

With gratitude for his service to the Senate and the Nation, for myself and the many others who have benefited from that service, I wish Mike the very best in all his future endeavors.

#### CONGRESSIONAL COALITION ON ADOPTION INSTITUTE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, today I rise to commemorate the 10th anniversary of a very special organization that is near and dear to my heart, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, or CCAI as it is more commonly known. This institute was formally established in 2001, but sprang